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ST. JEROME IN
THE WILDERNESS

by JUSEPE DE RIBERA
SPANISH (1588-1652)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs.
Eugene H. Welker



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LIVING ART IN DETROIT

The Michigan Artists' Exhibition is now past. The Michigan Artist-Craftsmen's Exhibition has just closed. This is a good time to speak of the dramatic and hopeful change which has taken place in contemporary American art, and of the problem which accompanies it.

The best level of the Michigan Artists Exhibition is now equal to the level of any of national surveys of American painting and sculpture. There are not one, not two or three, but many artists whose work is on the best contemporary level of talent and professional skill.

The Exhibition for Michigan Artist-Craftsmen also was found to be full of achievement and promise. Weaving, ceramics, silver have strong groups of artists at work, all over the state; but these are not the only fields in which distinguished work is being done.

What has happened here has occurred in greater or lesser degree over almost the whole of the United States. A generation ago the artistic life of this country was concentrated in New York. A very few other large cities in the East had minor centers of activity. But over most of the United States the local artists were really local. At the present moment the United States seems to be bursting out at the seams with talent. What has happened under our eyes in Detroit—this rapid growth of our local exhibitions from the level of local and amateur work to a vigorous and distinguished professional level—has gone farther and more rapidly here, in my opinion, than in most places. We have one of the most interesting and promising local situations in the country, I believe. But in considerable degree the same thing has been happening all over the country. When I served on the jury of the Youngstown, Ohio, regional exhibition a year ago, I was astonished at the vitality and interest of the work coming out of the Ohio, Indiana, western Pennsylvania area from artists whose names were entirely new to me. Vitality, skill, energy, taste are the words to describe this new generation.

But the physical organization of our artistic life is still concentrated as it was a generation ago, in New York. The journalism of art, the art dealers, the buying of the country, the selection of national exhibitions, all the apparatus by which artists achieve a reputation and earn their living, is still concentrated in that one place. But *one city alone* can no longer serve as a focus for the intense, active artistic life of a nation of one hundred and fifty million people covering an entire continent. In time we shall no doubt find out how to adapt our institutions and national habits to this new development of our national life. In the

meantime, our problem here is: What are we to do to make this a city in which fine talent can live and thrive and enrich American life?

You are not interested in art unless you are interested in what will come of this situation.

E. P. RICHARDSON

A ST. JEROME by RIBERA

Jusepe de Ribera, one of the great painters of Spain, has been represented in our collection by a study head of an *Old Man* which, though small, shows the singular power and intensity of his art. We have now been given, through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene H. Welker, an imposing example of his work on a great scale and of a subject in which he showed a special interest, St. Jerome, the ascetic and hermit (see front cover).¹

Ribera, though born in Spain, spent his life in Italy and his art is a link between the Italian tradition and the national school of Spain. He was born in Jativa, in the province of Valencia, the town from which the Borgia family also sprang. His father was a soldier who rose to a high post, moved to the Spanish territory of Naples about the beginning of the seventeenth century, was "Adjutant" of the Castel Nuovo and died there. The son studied painting first in Valencia, but the earliest certain record of his career is that in September 1616 he married the daughter of a Neapolitan painter, Giovanni Bernardino Azzolino, in Naples. The rest of his career was spent in that city. But Naples was then the capital of a province of Spain, and under the rule of a Viceroy was the chief city of the Spanish dominions in the Italian peninsula; so that Ribera's life was still spent in Spanish territory.

Before settling in Naples, Ribera had roamed over Rome and northern Italy and absorbed what Raphael, Sebastiano, Correggio and Paolo Veronese had to offer a young painter. But the decisive influence upon him was that of Caravaggio, who had died in 1609. Ribera became the single great independent figure among Caravaggio's followers, the only one able to absorb the elder painter's realism and dramatic chiaroscuro into his own strong and original imaginative impulse. Like Caravaggio, Ribera painted only from the living model, a practice by which he escaped from the overwhelming influence of High Renaissance art, and renewed the contact of painting with living experience. Like Caravaggio, he found beauty and deep significance in nature, even in things that seemed ugly to eyes accustomed to Raphael's smooth grace. "To the artist," I have heard Carl Milles say, "nothing is ugly except stupidity." Ribera would have agreed heartily.

Ribera was an artist who found a profound and moving poetry in the heroic age of Christianity, in the martyrs and the first hermits who had the stern will power to turn their backs on the luxury and decay of the Greco-Roman world and seek, in a life cleansed to the bone, a more spiritual vision of life

through asceticism, solitude and meditation. St. Jerome, the scholar hermit, was one of Ribera's favorite themes. Ribera painted these hermit saints not as decorative and ideal figures but as an intensely convincing vision of what asceticism must have been in those early days. His *St. Jerome* is an old man marked not only by his culture, experience and power of thought, but by his strength. He is a violently positive character, austere, iron-willed, of noble self-forgetfulness, worn by time and self-discipline but still vigorous and impressive.

This is a very characteristic picture by Ribera in his early maturity. It is easy to understand why such a strong, hard, intense art as this appealed to the strong, hard convictions of the men of the seventeenth century and brought the artist fame and success.

Ribera was a master of dramatic light and shadow. He was also a most convincing draughtsman. He painted with a full-loaded brush, sometimes using an enamel-smooth surface, sometimes a rugged, expressive, vibrating brush stroke. Although this canvas has a strong chiaroscuro and a monumentality of form which make it admirable when seen at a distance, it shows also an almost microscopic perfection of detail where detail would enrich the near view. Such apparent contradictions are a reminder that the artist uses images, not for their own sake, but to express the robust eloquence of his imagination.

E. P. RICHARDSON

¹ Cat. no. 970. Canvas. H. 77¼ in.; w. 60 in. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene H. Welker, 1949. Acc. no. 49.4. Three versions of the composition are known. One, which has a few additional inches of landscape and sky all around, is in the Academy of San Fernando, Madrid; when I saw it in the summer of 1949 it was so blackened and sunk into the canvas that one could form no conception of its quality. The present version comes from the collection of the American painter, Henry Mosler, who lived in Paris, and of his daughter. A third version was exhibited at the Galerie Charpentier, Paris, 1925, and is now in a private collection in New York. None are signed.

A TOTONAC PALMATE STONE

Augmenting the Institute's collection of Pre-Columbian art is a paddle-shaped palmate stone from Mexico.¹ Carved of gray, porous volcanic rock, it represents a maize god receiving or attending a human sacrifice. The standing figure rises from the chest of the victim whose arms and legs extend back along the sides of the stone.

Palmate stones of this type are peculiar to the culture of the Totonacs who settled the area in southern Mexico now occupied by the state of Vera Cruz. Unlike many *palmas*, which are decorated with conventionalized bird, insect or other animal motifs, our stone displays comparatively naturalistic representations of a plant, a human being and a deity. The back of the stone is undecorated.



THE MAIZE GOD RECEIVING A HUMAN SACRIFICE
PALMATE STONE, MEXICAN (SOUTHERN VERA CRUZ), ca. 1200 A.D.
City Appropriation, 1947

The curious shape of these *palmas* has led students of early American civilizations to consider the possible functions they may have served. Some maintain that they were used as architectural ornaments, either in niches on the facade of temples, or perhaps resting upright on a curved surface. Due to the fact that some were found in tombs, it has been suggested that *palmas* served as memorial stones. A third possible use has been suggested by Dr. Gordon F. Ekholm, whose studies² are based on two wall reliefs³ found in the large ball court at Tajín, a Totonacan site. The reliefs depict ball players and chieftains wearing objects resembling *palmas* on the front of wide belts. Dr. Ekholm suggests that these objects may be palmate stones or, more probably, wooden counterparts of *palmas*.

The association of the stones with the ceremonial ball game *tlachtli* may present a clue to the identity of the god represented on our *palma*. The maize stalks on the upper part suggest that the deity is one of the maize gods. He may be the Aztec maize god Centeotl, who assumes various forms. As Xochipilli Centeotl he is sometimes represented as the monkey Oçomàtli, god of sports, dancing, amusements and good luck in games. The head of the deity on this *palma* resembles that of a monkey. The stone may represent, therefore, a sacrifice to Xochipilli Centeotl, the maize god also associated with *tlachtli*.

There are, on the other hand, certain details which indicate that the figure may represent Xolotl, god of *tlachtli*, twins, dwarfs and humpbacks. According to legend, all the gods in the Aztec pantheon agreed to sacrifice themselves in order to give motion to the sun and moon which they had created. Xolotl, however, refused to die and eluded the sacrificial priest by turning into a twin-stalked maize plant. He was discovered, but to avoid capture he transformed himself into a maguey plant and then into a larva. He was finally seized, however, and sacrificed.⁴ The Aztecs probably based on this legend their rite of sacrificing dwarfs and humpbacks on the occasion of an eclipse when it was believed that the sun god needed them as he had needed Xolotl.

The body of the deity on our *palma* resembles to some extent that of a dwarf or humpback although his head has definite simian characteristics. In some Aztec reliefs and codices the spirit of the sacrificed warrior or captive, which rises from a gash in his chest, resembles the deity which the Indians believed he personified. Therefore, this *palma* may represent a sacrifice to Xolotl. The maize stalks are exact counterparts and the central motif of the headdress resembles the leaves of the maguey plant. Except for the absence of a larva motif, the iconographic details correspond to the content of the Xolotl legend cited above.

We cannot definitely identify the figure as Xochipilli Centeotl or Xolotl, however, despite the apparent indications favoring an attribution to one or the other. This *palma*, dated about 1200 A.D., probably antedates the Aztec legends which describe the deities. Furthermore, the Totonacan sites were comparatively remote from the Aztec centers and the two areas may well have had distinct mythologies.

Comparing this *palma* to the stone yokes also associated with the Totonacs, it is evident that the Indians took into account the natural properties of the material in hand. The yokes, decorated with small, complex motifs, are carved of a finer stone, such as diorite. The bold motifs of our *palma*, on the other hand, are consistent with the roughness of the stone from which it is carved.

A. S. CAVALLO

¹ Acc. no. 47.180. H. 19 in. City Appropriation, 1947.

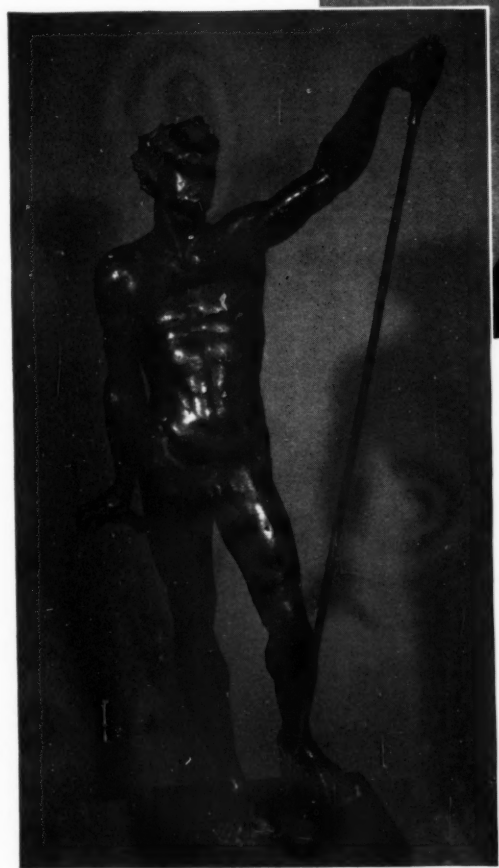
² Ekholm, Gordon F., "Palmate Stones and Thin Stone Heads: Suggestions on Their Possible Use," *American Antiquity*, Vol. XV, No. 1, July, 1949, pp. 1-9.

³ Drawings from photographs of these reliefs were published by Spinden. Ellen S., "The Place of Tajin in Totonac Archaeology," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. XXXV, No. 2, April-June, 1933, figs. 6, 7.

⁴ An account of the Xolotl legend as related by Sahagun is given in Burr, Hartley Alexander, *The Mythology of All Races*, Boston, 1920, XI, pp. 82-83.

TWO BRONZE FIGURES by JACOPO SANSOVINO

Two bronze sculptures by Jacopo Sansovino (1486-1570) which have been recently given to the museum by Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb might be



Above: NEPTUNE. Left: MARS
by JACOPO SANSOVINO, ITALIAN
(1486-1570)

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B.
Whitcomb, 1949

taken as illustrations of the true meaning of that much used, and abused, word "classicism." This is not because they are called *Neptune* and *Mars* (or *Neptune* and *Meleager*) but because they represent an artistic attitude which has welled up again and again in the past twenty-five hundred years as one of the recurring forms of thought in western art. Classicism's chief subject matter in sculpture has always been the human figure, studied naturally and realistically. Its chief danger has always been that sculptors without imagination would make of it simply a sterile imitation, on the one hand of the human body, on the other of Greek and Roman antiques. But to the artist of strong imagination, it offers an inexhaustible source of inspiration. Here in Sansovino's work one can see the qualities of a vital and imaginative classical style — an art of large, quiet harmony in its forms; of unity and lucid simplicity in its effects; of a rhythmic play of plastic volumes, planes, movements, which make their own grave poetry for the eye; an objective art, based upon a knowledge of nature, deepening but not transcending our natural vision of the world; an art which offers warmth, sentiment, grace within an atmosphere of calm. The classical artist constructs by his art an objective image, so that the spectator thinks of the work of art rather than of the personality or caprice or fantasy of the artist. Classical art, being thus so objective and natural, is as a form of artistic pleasure singularly aloof from that interest in the loves or sorrows of the artist's personal life which is so notable a feature of modern taste.

Jacopo Sansovino, one of the great sculptors of the Venetian sixteenth century, occupies a place in the artistic life of Venice as architect and sculptor comparable to the dominant position of Titian in painting. Arriving in Venice in 1527 he became the official architect of the Republic in 1529 and left a lasting mark upon the city's architecture. His Library of St. Mark and the Loggetta which he built at the foot of the Campanile as a hall of assembly for the procurators are an integral part of the city's beauty. The palace he built for the Corner family was the prototype of a whole series of palaces on the Grand Canal. As sculptor also his place was undisputed. No great project was undertaken during his lifetime which he did not design or supervise; and his workshop was, as Vasari said, "a seminary of that art in Italy."

Sansovino was Florentine by birth and worked first in Florence and Rome, at that time the centers of Italian sculpture and under the dominating leadership of Michelangelo. From Florence he derived the strain of naturalism in his sculpture, and the influence of Michelangelo's grandiosity; from his years in Rome he derived a love of Roman classicism. But in Venice he developed a decorative elegance and a rich, pictorial style quite his own.

We have had in our collection, to represent him, a very beautiful, small terra cotta sketch of a *River God* or *Allegory of Autumn*, given to us in 1945 by Mr. and Mrs. E. Raymond Field,² and a small colored terra cotta group of the *Virgin and Child with the Infant St. John*, attributed to him but possibly by his teacher, Andrea Sansovino. We have now acquired, as the generous gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb, this famous pair of statues of *Neptune* and

Mars (or *Meleager*) which are perhaps the most important High Renaissance bronze statues in America. They were purchased in Venice in the last century by a German collector, Count William von Pourtalès, from the Palazzo Rezzonico. This great Baroque palace, now preserved by the city of Venice as a museum, has associations for English-speaking peoples as the palace in which Robert Browning spent the last years of his life. The two bronzes are said to have come from the stairhall of the palace, where, indeed, there are today two empty niches that might have contained them. But the statues are older than the palace and were certainly made originally for some other monumental position.

After passing into the possession of the Pourtalès family, the two statues were exhibited in Berlin in 1898 and 1906. Before the first World War they were taken to St. Petersburg, where Count Friedrich von Pourtalès was ambassador from 1909 to 1914, to decorate the German Embassy. Since that time they have been in the Pourtalès country house in Silesia. As a result, although they are



MARS AND NEPTUNE (details) by JACOPO SANSOVINO

famous and have been often published or referred to in studies of Italian sculpture, they are actually very little known and present very interesting points of discussion for the art historian which, however, are more appropriately discussed in *The Art Quarterly* than here. I should, however, like to add one thing to what is said in *The Art Quarterly* on the question of whether the younger figure should be called *Mars* or *Meleager*. It has been called for the last half century at least a *Meleager*. I believe it should be called *Mars*. But the difficulty was to explain a figure of *Mars* with a garland in his hair, instead of the helmet with which he is customarily represented. That excellent classicist Nicolas Poussin,

however, supplies us with at least one other instance of a Mars crowned with flowers in his *Mars and Venus* in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, painted when he was under the strong influence of Venetian art, about 1630-35. The head of Poussin's Mars in that canvas might almost be a reminiscence of this figure, so similar is it in type and expression.³

The important thing is that we have here, superbly represented, the classical impulse in sculpture in two works by one of the great artists of the Renaissance. In fact, these figures show how the Renaissance surpassed its models. The collection of antique marbles which a Venetian collector, Cardinal Domenico Grimani, bequeathed to the Republic of Venice in 1523, is actually less interesting, and farther removed from the best Greek classical sculpture, than these bronzes are. Sansovino achieved a warmth, a rhythm of form, and a pictorial style quite different from the cold linear style of Roman copies of Greek art. The contrast between the elastic vigor of the *Mars* and the more relaxed older figure of *Neptune* is observed with the naturalism which had been characteristic of Florentine artists since Donatello. The ardor and pathos of the expression (see detail illustration of Neptune's head), the mingling of strength and venerability in this figure, are impressive conceptions. And over the vigorous modeling Sansovino's pictorial style throws a shimmer of lights and shadows which veil and intensify the poetic resonance of the figure. All these characteristics represent the maturity of Sansovino's art. I believe that these bronzes were executed in the 1540's, and belong to the period of the famous marble statue of *St. John Baptist* in the Church of the Frari, Venice, the four famous bronze statues of the Logetta, and the original wax models of the bronze door of the Sacristy in San Marco. They belong to one of the greatest moments of Italian Renaissance sculpture, and to the highest achievements of the artist.

E. P. RICHARDSON

¹ *Neptune*, 37 inches high; acc. no. 49.417. *Mars* (or *Meleager*), 43 inches to the up-raised hand; acc. no. 49.418. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb, 1949. Collections: Palazzo Rezzonico, Venice; Count William von Pourtalès, Berlin; Count Friedrich von Pourtalès. Ref.: W. Bode, *Werk über die Renaissance Ausstellung Berlin 1898*, p. 1, pl. XXVIII and LVI; W. von Bode, *Die italienischen Bronze Statuetten der Renaissance*, 1907, Vol. II, p. 23, pl. CLIV; Leo Planiscig, *Venezianische Bildbauer der Renaissance*, Vienna, 1921, p. 353; Paul Schubring, *Die Kunst der Hoch renaissance in Italien* Propylaen, 1926, p. 516 (as being by San Gallo); Ministry of the Interior, Berlin, 1927, *Verzeichnis der national wertvollen Kunstwerke*, p. 19, no. 362; Hans R. Weihrauch, *Studien zum Werke der Jacopo Sansovino*, Strasbourg, 1935, p. 96; Ulrich Middeldorf, *Thieme-Becker*, Vol. XXIX, 1935, p. 405; A. Venturi, *Encyclopaedia italiana*, Vol. XXX, 1936, p. 58 ff.; Hans R. Weihrauch, *Thieme-Becker*, Vol. XXXII, 1938, p. 469; Leo Planiscig, expertise, June, 1948.

² See *Bulletin*, Vol. XXV, 1946, p. 7.

³ See C. C. Cunningham, "Poussin's Mars and Venus," *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts*, Boston, Vol. XXXVIII, 1940, p. 56. See also *Art Quarterly*, Vol. XIII, Winter 1950, pp. 3-9.



THE BATH by JEAN-BAPTISTE PATER, FRENCH (1695-1736)
Gift of the Founders Society General Membership Fund, 1949

AN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SCENE

by PATER

Watteau, Pater and Lancret are the three great painters of *Fêtes Galantes*, the charmingly theatrical genre scenes — lovers meeting in shady groves, musicians and dancers rehearsing under the oaks of Ile-de-France — which form perhaps the most original contribution of France to eighteenth century painting. Until a few months ago only Lancret represented in our collection that phase of French genius, with his *Hunting Repast*, an exquisite symphony in gray and rose unrivalled in this country. The recent acquisition of Jean-Baptiste Pater's *The Bath* introduces in our museum the second member of this trio, less subtle certainly than Watteau, but with something of his feeling for color, less con-

scientious perhaps than Lancret, but quite as skillful and endowed with a more personal sense of graceful composition and movement.

Although he has been criticized at times for his superficiality and his unashamed copying of Watteau, Pater is no mean painter. Watteau, who was his compatriot from Valenciennes, recognized his talent when the young provincial arrived in Paris, and accepted him as a pupil — one of the few he ever had. He soon paid Pater the compliment of resenting his early successes, and apparently dismissed him a few months later; but it is significant that, in a touching gesture of repentance, he spent the last weeks of his life teaching his young rival, as Pater himself said, "all that he ever knew about painting." After Watteau's death, the young man completed the paintings which his master had left unfinished and adopted Watteau's manner so well that even in the eighteenth century it became difficult at times to distinguish between the works of the two painters. A popular, prolific artist, he was extremely successful in his short life and counted among his protectors most of Watteau's patrons, fastidious connoisseurs such as Jean de Julienne, who had engravings made of every known work by Watteau, Sirois and Gersaint, the famous picture dealers of the period, and of course, the mad comtesse de Verrue, "la belle dame de Volupté," whose collections were famous through Europe. No *Folie* in the suburbs of Paris, no hotel in the Faubourg Saint-Germain was without its pendants by Pater, all on the themes of love or music or dance, *Fête Champêtre* and *Concert Champêtre*, or *L'Amour et le Badinage* and *Les Amants Heureux*.

The Bath (or *The Pleasures of Summer*, as the subject was called in the eighteenth century) is one of such pendants, its companion being known as *The Desire to Please*. Both subjects are trite, ever so slightly impertinent. *The Desire to Please* (the best known version of which is in the Louvre museum) represents a young woman seated at her dressing table and surrounded by her maids, one of whom is placing a ribbon in her mistress' powdered hair; at the left, a young man, half hidden behind a curtain, catches a glimpse of his beloved. In *The Bath*, another young woman is seen getting out of a large metal bath, over the side of which a white cloth is hung. She too is helped by her *soubrettes*, while a young lover is seen, at the right this time, peering unsuccessfully through a window. Even in the eighteenth century, which was easily satisfied in such matters, it would be difficult to imagine more flimsy themes. "Des œufs de mouche sur des toiles d'araignée" — fly specks on spider cobwebs — Voltaire, I believe, called the plots of Marivaux' comedies. Pater's stories are even more slight.

Such a trifle, of course, should be judged on its own merits; and, short of profundity and emotive power, *The Bath* possesses many appealing qualities. There is a great deal of originality in the assymetry of the composition, even in the treatment of the marble walls and gilded pilasters which, bathed in a diffused golden sunlight, bind together the various elements of the picture. The main group of the *soubrettes* and their mistress, plastically so pleasing with its complex interplay of many figures and its blending of nacreous flesh tints and

shimmering satins, is as delightful a pyramidal design as exists in eighteenth century *tableaux de cabinet*. More important still is another quality, fresh and unexpected in the 1730's: a sense of restrained movement and gentle rhythm, which is as far from Watteau's dream-like serenity as it is from Boucher's exuberance. Rameau, not Lully or Grétry, was the dancing master of these *soubrettes*. But Pater's greatest gift, so evident in *The Bath* (which has lost nothing of its brilliance), is his feeling for color and texture. The tender yellow in the embroidered bodice of the maid seated on the floor, the soft mauve faintly touched with rose of another's petticoat, the muted pink of the curtains in the background, all preserve something of the crystalline quality of flowers reflected in a mirror: there, without over-prettying, Pater has absorbed, as few painters ever would, the most vividly sensible of Watteau's "grâces inimitables." All these are indeed great qualities. If, as Osbert Sitwell said, the aim of the Rococo is to surprise the beholder into delight, then *The Bath* is in our museum the epitome of the Rococo.

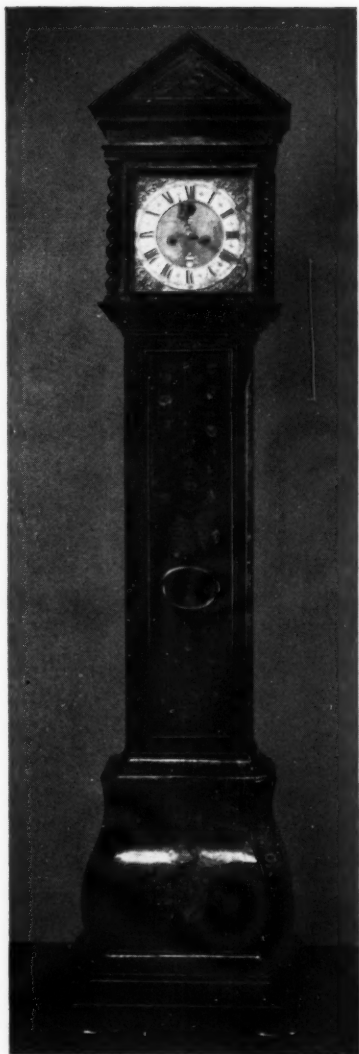
PAUL L. GRIGAUT

¹ Cat. no. 941. Canvas. H. 17 in.; w. 13½ in. Gift of Founders Society General Membership Fund, 1949. Acc. no. 49.463. Coll.: Earl of Lonsdale, sold 1887; Arthur James; Mrs. Arthur James (sold Christie's, October, 1948). Exhibited in 1913 at the Burlington Fine Arts Club, Exhibition of XVIII century French Art, No. 21; described and reproduced in the catalogue (1914) of that exhibition; exhibited in 1933 at the Three French Reigns Exhibition, London, 1933, No. 438. Reproduced in color on cover of *Apollo*, March, 1949. There exist several replicas and versions of the theme; they are listed in Miss Ingersoll-Smousse's *Jean-Baptiste Pater* (Paris, 1928), under the title: *Le Plaisir de l'été* (Nos. 306-310, the Detroit painting being No. 308). It is under that title that the subject was engraved by L. Surugue in 1744; the engraving, however, reproduces an oblong picture similar in shape to the version in the duc d'Arenberg's collection. The replica in the Wallace Collection (No. 472 in the 1920 catalogue) is somewhat drier and darker in tone; that formerly in Potsdam, castle of Sans-Souci, is a sketch which apparently was repainted in parts.

CLOCKS FROM THE DELBOS BEQUEST

The earliest clocks were all very large, ponderous affairs placed in towers and inside of great cathedrals. Power to drive their heavy parts, hammered out in a blacksmith's shop, was supplied by weights. Mechanical effects, by means of which the hour was struck, drums beaten and figures moved, were taken over from the earlier clepsydra or water clock. One of the first unquestioned mechanical clocks, made in 1360 for Charles V of France by a Henry de Vick, set the pattern for all great clocks for the next century and a half and, from 1500 on, for small, domestic ones also.

The domestic or chamber clock, in contrast to the tower clock, was so small and relatively so inexpensive that the householder could afford to own one and place it in an ordinary room. A French poem (Jean de Meung's *Romaunt de la Rose*) mentioned such clocks as early as 1270:



Above: TALL CASE CLOCK by PIETER KLOCH, DUTCH, active early eighteenth century, C. Edmund Delbos Bequest, 1949. Above left: CLOCK by BALTAZAR MARTINOT, FRENCH, active 1714-1725, C. Edmund Delbos Bequest, 1949. Left: "LANTERN" CLOCK by JOHN EDLIN, ENGLISH, active late seventeenth century, C. Edmund Delbos Bequest, 1949.

*"And then he made his clocks strike
in his halls and in his chambers,
with wheels very subtly contrived
with a continuing movement."*

One in Windsor Castle was given to Anne Boleyn on her wedding morning by Henry VIII. Yet it was not until nearly 1600 that these domestic clocks became common. By 1658 they could be found almost everywhere in Europe, particularly in England.

These "lantern," "bird-cage," "bed-post" or "Cromwellian" clocks are all fairly close in appearance and construction. To this group belongs an interesting, weight-driven brass clock inscribed *John Edlin, London, 1695*, given to the Institute as part of the bequest of Mr. C. Edmund Delbos.¹ Called "lantern" because they followed the form of the lantern of the period, such clocks were placed on a bracket or fastened to the wall in order to have a long, free fall for the weights.

The Edlin clock has the usual two side frets or ornaments around the bell; in front the brass dial plate has been extended upward to form a curved area upon which the maker's name has been inscribed. Stylized foliate forms have been engraved upon the corner spandrels. Roman numerals mark the hours; Arabic ones the minutes and the alarm disc. With a simple yet completely adequate mechanism, a heavy driving weight was fastened to the end of a flat chain, and the clock wound by pulling down the opposite or free end of the chain.

Records tell us that John Edlin² was apprenticed to a Robert Webster, and was admitted to the "Clockmakers' Company" in 1687. This company or trade guild, which had received its charter from Charles I in 1631, had extremely strict rules for protecting its craft, and exacted high standards of workmanship. It even possessed the right of search, which it exercised for over a century, to prevent the "making, buying, selling, transporting and importing, any bad, deceitful or insufficient clocks, watches, larums, sun-dials, boxes or cases for the said trade." Every part of John Edlin's clock measures up to these standards. The bronze bell was cast, not punched, and has a remarkable quality of tone as a result.³ Every part was painstakingly fashioned by hand; marks made by using compass and file may still be seen on the pendulum, the toothed wheels, weight and hands. Earlier clocks had possessed an hour hand only, but by 1695 hour and minute hands had become almost standard equipment. The cunningly wrought ones here are very old in design, and close to those known as "Tiffany" today.

France, like England, exacted high standards from its clockmakers, under regulations drawn up under Francis I in 1544. French monarchs paid huge sums for clocks and watches. Horologists employed by Louis XIV lived at court and had the right of entry to the king's presence; each morning one wound and adjusted the various watches which his sovereign was to wear that day. Among Louis' clockmakers was a Louis Martinot, one of a long and famous line of court clockmakers who served the monarchs of France from about 1572 until about

1729. A handsome mantled clock,⁴ part of the Delbos bequest, is engraved with the name of another gifted member of the family, *Baltazar Martinot, Paris*, who worked between 1714 and 1725.

The case of ormulu and tortoise-shell veneer is decorated with urn-shaped finials and a relief of Time seated with his scythe. The glass-enclosed frame, like the brass mechanism, was cast, hammered and finished by hand. Expert cabinet work went into the carefully seasoned and fitted wood of the back of the case. The effectively contrasting inlay of metal and tortoise-shell known as "Boulle" work, from its originator, was a leading style throughout the eighteenth century.

One of the most revolutionary discoveries in the whole history of clock-making was the introduction of the pendulum in 1658. In Europe "pendule" replaced the earlier word "horloge." In colonial America, newspapers urged that old-model clocks be "turned into Pendulums." The pendulum, applied first to the lantern clock, was next enclosed, with the weights, in a long wooden case or box which could stand on the floor, thus protecting the movement from dust. This long case, or "grandfather," clock, became extremely popular immediately, and the first cases of plain painted pine gave way almost at once to handsome ones decorated with elaborate carving, veneer and marquetry.

Dutch marquetry, introduced into England by inlayers who followed William of Orange when he became king after the Revolution of 1688, was somewhat bolder and more fanciful than English work. It is seen in a rich, ornate clock⁵ inscribed with the name *Pieter Kloch, Amsterdam*, made in the early eighteenth century. Into the solid oak of the case has been inserted a most intricate inlay of sandalwood, ebony, pear and rosewood, forming a coat of arms in the lower section, and luxuriant flowers, arabesques and birds in the upper. The clock has corkscrew pillars and a hood top.

Metal parts have been executed with the same skill as the cabinet work, from the engraved brass dial and attached cast spandrels of the exterior to the finely wrought movement within the long case. By the end of the seventeenth century, clocks had achieved considerable accuracy, following the use of a longer pendulum with an anchor escapement. Besides the gracefully shaped hands indicating the hours and minutes, Pieter Kloch added attachments which show the changing phases of the moon and, in the lower part, the sign of the zodiac, day of the week and day of the month. To a people whose homes boasted few almanacs and no printed calendars as yet, such attachments were especially useful.

Because of the infinite patience and skill with which each part of the mechanism and case had to be laboriously fashioned by hand, clocks like these three were never cheap, even at the time they were made. It remained for the practical nineteenth century craftsmen of the New World to work out a system of mass-produced timekeepers with machine-made, interchangeable parts, thus placing moderately priced clocks and watches within the reach of all. Indispensable and precisely accurate though these modern products are, they will

rarely capture the interest of the connoisseur as do the earlier, hand-wrought clocks like those bequeathed to the Institute by Mr. Delbos.

ELIZABETH H. PAYNE

¹ Acc. no. 49.399. H. 14 in.; w. 6 in.

² Britten, F. J., *Old Clocks and Their Makers*, London, 4th edition, p. 462.

³ The writer is indebted to Mr. Royal G. Foote for this and other information.

⁴ Acc. no. 49.401. H. 23½ in.; w. 14½ in.

⁵ Acc. no. 49.400. H. 96½ in.; width at base 27 in.



EMBROIDERED PANEL, DUTCH (?), Seventeenth Century
Gift of Mrs. Walter O. Briggs, 1949

A DUTCH CRÉOLIERIE

A most unusual embroidered panel, the recent gift of Mrs. Walter O. Briggs, enriches the textile collection with an example showing the impact of the wonders of the native life of the New World upon the craftsmen of Europe. It is a table cover worked probably from a design adapted from illustrated books of travel.

The black ground sets off beautifully the rich color scheme with its elaborate shadings. Large floral shapes that seem to change into mysterious creatures from a luxuriant jungle form an elaborate setting around a group of two Indians with a basket of fruits. The Indians are clad in kilts of long feathers, they wear

feather diadems and pearl ornaments in their ears. The fruit basket is obviously offered as a gift, for both men point to it, one touching a group of pears, the other a bunch of grapes, while a big bird is pecking at the berries. The remaining space is crowded with more birds, a pigeon and a hopoe, and with bouquets of carnations and fantastic flowers. The octagonal shape of the panel is outlined and accentuated with a floral tendril. The panel is worked very evenly in small cross stitch on fine canvas, with the excellent floss silk characteristic of the period.

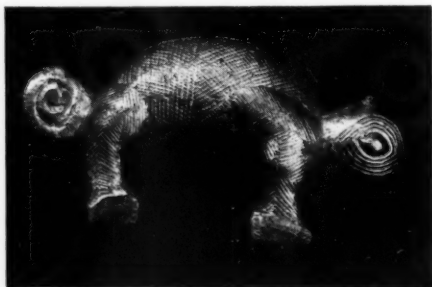
The delightful composition may be called a "créolerie," a combination of American Indian and European motives, as in the 18th century the European adaptations of Far Eastern motives were called "chinoiserie." It belongs to the late Baroque period, towards the end of the seventeenth century, and was probably made in Holland.

ADELE COULIN WEIBEL

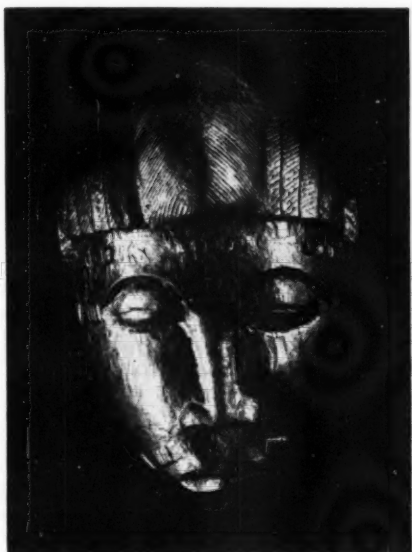
Acc. no. 49.419. Height of the panel 47 inches; width 63 inches. Gift of Mrs. Walter O. Briggs, 1949.

AFRICAN NEGRO ART IN THE INSTITUTE

We are quite proud of our collection of African Negro Art which, since it dates largely from the middle twenties, may be considered one of the very earliest in America conceived as an artistic, rather than ethnographical, entity. Already a valuable nucleus existed in the old Detroit Museum's collection, formed by specimens purchased by Frederick Stearns in Paris in the first years of this century. Among these should be mentioned a characteristic Gabun "idol" of great dignity, a fragile carved and painted stool from the Yoruba tribe, an almost cubistic female fetish figure from the Western Belgian Congo—all of types difficult to obtain today. To these examples, Dr. Valentiner added as early as 1926 a number of Benin bronzes and ivories, as well as Ivory Coast masks, all chosen purely for their esthetic appeal. Thanks to Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass and Mr. Tannahill, whose appreciation of African art is of long standing, several pieces of great importance, illustrated here, were added last year to that rather comprehensive group.

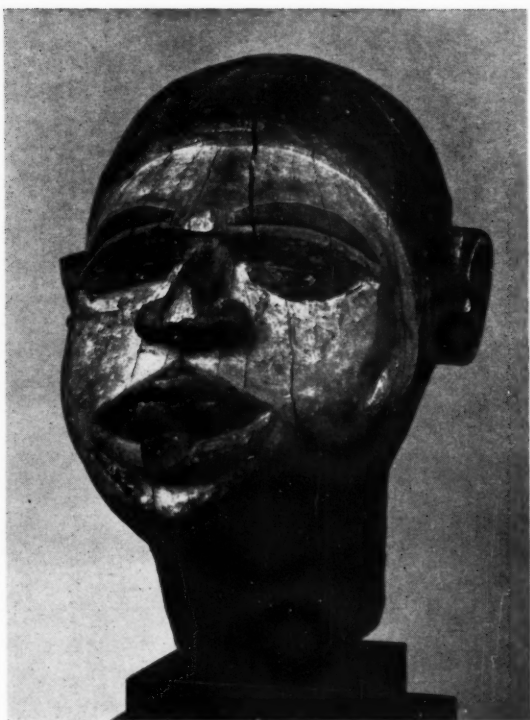


PIECES FROM CHIEF'S HEADDRESS, AFRICAN (AITUTU TRIBE, IVORY COAST)
Gift of Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass, 1949



PIECES FROM CHIEF'S HEADRESS, AFRICAN (AITUTU TRIBE, IVORY COAST)
Gift of Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass, 1949

The earliest of these is a seventeenth century bronze plaque¹ (p. 72) from the Kingdom of Benin, whose civilization is the most impressive and at the same time, on account of its reliance upon wholesale human sacrifices, the most sinister of the continent. Like the other bronzes of the same general type, it is evidently one of the plaques depicting "battle scenes and warrior deeds," which at one time decorated the wooden pillars of the royal palace, so huge that, as a seventeenth century Dutch traveller described it, it was "as large as the whole city of Haarlem." The capital city, where the palace stood, was destroyed in 1897 by a punitive expedition dispatched to avenge the murder of a British consul. At that time several thousand plaques similar to ours were found in the storehouses of the city, sent to England, and later sold at auction as curios or specimens of barbaric art. Yet, along with the life-size heads of Benin princes and princesses discovered at the same time, these plaques are among the masterpieces of bronze casting of all periods. Rather large in size and in deep relief, they are executed in the difficult *cire perdue* technique, a process used constantly by the Bini. The plaque acquired by the Institute apparently belongs to what has been called the "classical" period of Bini bronze-making (1500-1691); and indeed the figure, represented upon a characteristic background of palmettes and dots, has the dignity and restraint we Europeans associate with classicism. Even the head, too large for the body which supports it, and typical of the indifference of African sculptors to realistic proportions, adds to the impression of power and impassibility. Such plaques are becoming increasingly rare, since so many of them — 260 in the British Museum, some 500 in Berlin — are already in museums. Our Bini knight is therefore a welcome as well as a necessary addition to our collection.



Left: COURT ATTENDANT, AFRICAN (BENIN), Seventeenth Century.
 Right: HEAD, AFRICAN (CAMEROON), Nineteenth Century.
 Gifts of Robert H. Tannahill, 1949.

More impressive still is another gift from Mr. Tannahill to the Institute: a life-size head of painted wood which is one of the remarkable pieces of Negro sculpture in America.² It comes from the parklands of the Cameroons, one of the few sections of Africa where large sculptures may be found. Like most examples of African art characterized rather by plastic sensibility than intellectual content, the head now in Detroit is a masterpiece of schematization, in which the wood carver has omitted all that he considered non-essential. "Appreciation of sculpture depends upon the ability to respond to forms in three dimensions," Henry Moore once said; with sensual logic and an intensity of feeling rare in works based on tradition, the anonymous sculptor who with such sharpness carved the Detroit head possessed that quality to a high degree.

Among the rarest examples of African art are the gold objects or small wooden figures covered with native gold leaf which were brought back from the Ivory Coast some twenty years ago. Such objects were probably quite common in the regions rich in gold; but most of them have been melted down for their metal.³ Six figurines of that type, of soft carved wood overlaid with a thin layer of gold, which once adorned the crown of a chieftain of the Aitututu tribe, have

been added by Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass to our African collections. Four of these are illustrated here¹: a human face with tribal markings, a ram's head, a crab and what is apparently a leopard. Not reproduced are a scorpion and a toad. It is difficult to express in words the delicacy of these spirited figures. Small in size and great in art, exquisitely carved and at the same time strongly, tersely modelled, they are among the most appealing artistic attainments of the Aitututu tribe, where art is so highly considered that the artist-craftsman is exempted from menial tasks. We know so little of the evolution of African sculpture, based on tribal traditions and repetition, that it is difficult to date such pieces as ours accurately. The perfect preservation of the wood core seems to indicate a date well into the nineteenth century, while the excellence of the craftsmanship is characteristic of the works made before European influences penetrated the region.

PAUL L. GRIGAUT

¹ Acc. no. 49.534. H. 17³/₁₆ in; w. 7 in. Gift of Robert H. Tannahill, 1949.

² Acc. no. 49.346. H. 11¹/₂ in. Gift of Robert H. Tannahill, 1949. The face and neck painted white, the hair and eyebrows black. Coll.: Wolf, Vienna; Volkerkunde Museum, Vienna. Acquired, like the Benin plaque, from Julius Carlebach, New York.

³ Cf. *African Negro Art*, ed. by James Johnson Sweeney, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1935, p. 11.

⁴ Acc. no. 49.340. Height varies from 1¹/₂ inches to 3 inches. Gift of Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass, 1949. Coll.: Dr. Himmelheber, Karlsruhe; Mrs. Lillian Henkel Haass.

A BECKMANN STILL LIFE

Crucifixion, Death, Beggars, The Morgue, Seduction—these seem appropriate titles for the work of Max Beckmann, whose largest and best known canvases portray the brutality and suffering of man.

Still Life with Lilies,¹ however, is not the exception it may seem. Although Beckmann has characteristically been a man commenting on life, he has also been a man painting. Form, color, space—these are the particular means by which he has always achieved his expression and, "cursed or blessed with a terrible and vital sensuousness,"² he is dedicated to these means. In the *Still Life*, a collection of objects rather than a "subject," he can honestly delight in formal pleasures.

"To transform three into two dimensions is . . . an experience full of magic . . ."³ In this *Still Life* Beckmann indulges freely in that experience. His typical solution—one that also prevailed in the middle ages—is the use of a shifting point of view. The piano, wall, and window are seen at eye-level, head on; the plate, vases, and table are all seen from above, but each from a different vantage point. Beckmann, like most modern artists, rejects "correct" perspective because it in effect destroys the essentially two-dimensional picture surface. For

the same reason also, the forms are not modelled in light and shade, but are given in flat color areas.

In the *Still Life with Lilies* these formal elements and others combine forces to produce a work of decided personality. The primitive perspective, the rude and slashing outlines, the unrefined surfaces, the brash colors (brilliant and luminous red, green, blue, black, white), endow Mr. Beckmann's bouquet with a barbaric dignity and splendor.

VIRGINIA HARRIMAN

¹ Cat. no. 986. H. 37¼ inches; w. 24 inches. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. George Kamperman, 1950. Acc. no. 50.20.

² Max Beckmann, *On My Painting*, New York, 1941, p. 7.

³ *Ibid*, p. 9.



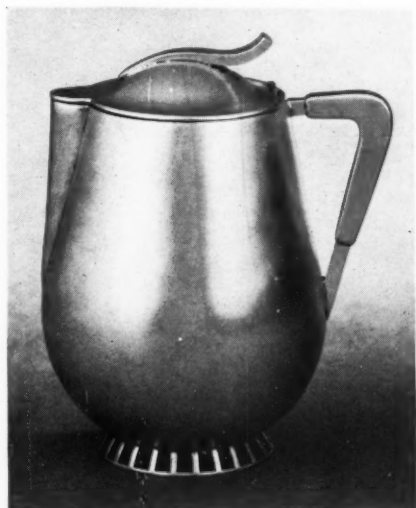
STILL LIFE WITH LILIES by MAX BECKMANN, GERMAN CONTEMPORARY
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. George Kamperman, 1950

TWO WORKS by MICHIGAN ARTIST-CRAFTSMEN

The increasing high standards of Michigan craftsmanship are well represented by the two pieces purchased for the Museum from the Fifth Annual Michigan Artist-Craftsmen Exhibition.

A silver syrup jug¹ by the Kenney-Eagans (Marion Kenney Eagan and Fred E. Eagan), outstanding Detroit silversmiths, received the Founders Society Purchase Prize. This piece will be an important addition to our small but growing collection of twentieth century silver. The jug is an interesting example of outside raising, in which the form is stretched in one piece from a small disk of silver. Extremely simple in shape and decoration, the piece has been given a pleasant weight, well expressed in the sturdy design. Small pieces of silver set in a diagonal course around the base create shadows which give balance to the rather small base. The handle and thumb rest are made up of several pieces of silver soldered together in vertical bands.

The Kenney-Eagans represent the maturity of the art of silversmithing in Michigan. Both were born in Detroit and obtained their training in the metal-



Above: SILVER SYRUP JUG by MARION KENNEY EAGAN and FRED E. EAGAN. Gift of the Founders Society General Membership Fund, 1950. Right: LINEN TABLECLOTH by RUTH INGVARSON. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry L. Winston, 1950

workshop at Cass Technical High School under the direction of Greta Pack. With this sound fundamental training they have gained their present excellence by constant application to their craft. The Kenney-Eagan studio in Detroit is also a school in which many of our best craftsmen received their training.

Another excellent example of contemporary crafts was added to the collection through the Mr. and Mrs. Henry L. Winston Purchase Prize used to acquire a linen tablecloth² by Ruth Ingvarson. The tablecloth was selected as an outstanding example of the integration of material and idea, qualities specified by the donors of the prize. Pink and grey linen threads are combined in the cloth, giving a soft tonal effect accented by a geometric pattern formed by the use of the grey threads.

Miss Ingvarson has for many years been active in raising the standards of textile arts in Michigan. Born in Ystad, Sweden, Miss Ingvarson studied in the studio of the famous weaver, Marta Maas Fjetterstron, who specialized in rugs and hangings, and later in the Hand Arbetets Vanner in Stockholm. After coming to this country Miss Ingvarson joined the group of weavers active at Cranbrook before the founding of the Cranbrook Academy of Art. For some years she maintained a studio in Highland Park but has more recently moved to Detroit. At present she is instructor of weaving at the Art School of the Society of Arts and Crafts.

The Kenney-Eagan jug and the Ingvarson tablecloth will not only increase the richness of the Museum collection but it is hoped that they will be of value and inspiration to the many students working in this area.

WILLIAM E. WOOLFENDEN

¹ Acc. no. 50.47. H. 4 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches. Gift of the Founders Society General Membership Fund, 1950.

² Acc. no. 50.46. L. 104 in.; w. 58 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry L. Winston, 1950.

One of the major additions to the Institute in the past year is the gallery devoted to the Arts of French Canada and Early Detroit. The furniture, silver, sculpture and paintings, which illustrate the old St. Lawrence River culture of Detroit's first century, have recently been supplemented by a number of Detroit portraits and views. The effect is both attractive and distinctive. But we hope that it can be still further enriched. The 250th anniversary of the city will be celebrated in 1951. The Institute would be grateful for help especially in acquiring early engravings, lithographs or aquatints of the city before 1880. The absence of such early views is one of the most serious lacks in this gallery. We hope for the assistance of those who are fond of their city in building a collection of the artistic records of its varied and interesting past.

E.P.R.